

CREATING A FOOD SAFETY CULTURE

We can write the best food safety plans in the world, but they won't do any good if we can't count on them happening in the real world. Reality is that things get busy, the unpredictable happens, and we can't be everywhere at once. We can adjust for this by *creating a food safety culture* by using a systems approach and investing in our people.

WHAT MAKES UP A FOOD SAFETY CULTURE?

1. THE THINGS YOU CAN VISIBLY SEE.

The tangible surface layer of your food safety culture is everything someone sees if they come to your facilities, including your equipment, your buildings, the way your workers behave, your records and documentation.

2. THE PRACTICES THAT ARE SET IN PLACE.

The middle layer of your food safety culture is about the way your company does things, including your policies and practices, the way products and food contact surfaces are handled, your training programs, and the way management speaks and acts about food safety.

3. THE UNWRITTEN RULES.

And finally, the deepest layer of your food safety culture are the values and unspoken realities that underlie your company's food safety actions. Your team takes their cues from you. What are they seeing? What are they doing in reality? What really happens when things aren't done according to the company practices? Are there enough resources to realistically address any problems?

THERE ARE BENEFITS TO HAVING A FOOD SAFETY CULTURE!

1. Food safety culture **INSTILLS THE JUDGMENT & DECISION MAKING** you want as a business throughout your team
2. Standardizing your processes can **SAVE YOU—THE LEADER—TIME**.
3. Investing in training your people **CUTS DOWN ON CHASING PEOPLE OR TASKS** to ensure completion and follow through.
4. Creating a food safety culture creates a **PROACTIVE MINDSET** in your team.
5. Food safety culture **ENGAGES YOUR TEAM** and creates a **LEARNING MINDSET**.
6. You can feel confident you are **PRODUCING SOUND, SAFE FOOD**.

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Creating a food safety culture doesn't happen on its own. As the leaders of the team, we need to commit to the importance of creating this food safety culture and work to cultivate just as we cultivate our fields and our businesses.

WAYS WE CAN CREATE A FOOD SAFETY CULTURE:

1. Standardize your processes.

Take the time to make your core processes repeatable and standardized. This will ensure consistency across the organization.

2. Always give the 'WHY'.

Connect the actions you're expecting from your team with the reasons for them. Bonus if you can connect them to your goals as a business and your workers' goals for themselves.

3. Spend the time on GOOD initial training.

Investing in your people's knowledge and understanding repays itself tenfold. Budget the time it takes to prepare for and train your workers well at the outset.

4. Reinforce your trainings.

Reinforce the why's and the how's during daily operations. Connect their training concepts to their actions.

5. Do regular refresher trainings.

Repetition reinforces learning, and doesn't take too much time the more regularly you refresh your trainings. Companies with solid, thriving food safety cultures tend to do regular refreshers.

6. Follow your own processes.

Roles can blur in independent businesses, especially when your home or personal life may be an intrinsic part of your facility, your business, and your brand. Your team takes their cues from you, so make sure you are following the same rules and processes you are expecting them to.

7. Make time for food safety tasks part of the regular work day.

Build the time needed for food safety tasks into the regular work day. If cleaning needs to happen at the end of the shift, you may need to stop production earlier so cleaning isn't happening when your team is pushing their limits. If you treat it as an afterthought or additional task, it will become optional.

8. Look for root causes and adjust the overall system.

Looking for root causes takes the focus off people and blame and lets us focus on the source of the problem, not the system. When we assess and adjust, we reinforce our food safety culture.